

SOCIAL CARE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

7 February, 2019

Chairperson: Councillor L.M.Purcell

Vice Chairperson: Councillor S.E.Freeguard

Councillors: A.P.H.Davies, C.Galsworthy, J.Miller,
S.Paddison, S.H.Reynolds, D.Whitelock,
O.S.Davies and C.Williams

Officers In Attendance: A.Jarrett, K.Warren, J.Bowditch, E.O'Brien,
K.Wedmore, J.Hodges, R.Davies, N.Headon,
J.Woodman-Ralph and N.Jones

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.R.Lockyer and P.D.Richards

1. **MINUTES OF THE SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (BUDGET)**

Members noted the minutes of the Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Budget (Special) held on the 12 December 2018. Members asked that their concern in relation to the withdrawal of the Welfare Rights Unit be emphasised further. The Unit has provided an excellent service in assisting the people of Neath Port Talbot.

2. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2018/2019.**

Discussion took place on the impact of neurodiversity, particularly Autism and its implications and whether there was merit in arranging a Task and Finish Group. This would be looked at in further detail and what the implications were for Education and whether this could be a joint piece of work between Education, Skills and Culture and Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. Scrutiny Officers to explore options and bring back to next meeting.

3. PRE-SCRUTINY

The Committee scrutinised the following items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

4.1 Housing Options Service

The Committee received information in relation to the Housing Options Service, as contained within the circulated report.

Members queried the lack of affordable housing available for vulnerable individuals. Officers explained that the service had not seen an increase in numbers presenting, but the complexity of cases had increased. In addition, this resulted in difficulty in accessing suitable and affordable accommodation. Officers stated that some individuals with complex needs were unable to manage their tenancy. In some instances, Gofal were able to provide support to individuals with Mental Health needs. Officers added that the service was also looking at recruiting a Mental Health Support Worker to assist with these cases. Assistance was also given to vulnerable individuals to help manage their finances to prevent a problem with tenancies. Support is provided until the individual is confident to manage their own finances.

Members asked what health provision was available to individuals with no fixed address. Officers informed the Committee there were two General Practitioners available in the area who provided health support.

Members queried why there was still rough sleepers if the introduction of the Housing Act 2014 had given more options for the authority housing. Officers explained the criteria was used fully to enable us to assist homeless presentations but that in some instances it was a life choice but support was still offered.

Members queried the process that is in place for emergency calls during non-working hours. Officers explained that there was a 24 hour telephone duty service provided by the Duty Team. Emergency Support would be provided with a full assessment undertaken the following day. Funding has been received from Welsh Government specifically to improve services for rough sleepers. As a result a night shelter has

been opened 7 nights a week until the end of March. This will be monitored to establish the need going forward. In addition, during winter months the service provides winter provision for rough sleepers from Bed and Breakfast accommodation to sleeping bags, hats and gloves dependant on the preference of the person. Third sector organisations also provide refreshments once a week.

Members asked in relation to temporary accommodation, would the tenants receive housing benefits immediately. Officers explained an application form would be completed the day the tenant moved in and the process would be exactly the same. Members queried whether there was any temporary accommodation available outside the Neath area. Officers explained that work was ongoing to develop a unit in Port Talbot. Temporary accommodation was available in Neath but when looking to move individuals to permanent accommodation this would be in their home area.

Members asked how do the individuals travel to their allocated temporary accommodation if they are not in any of the town centres. Officers said that this would form part of the assessment.

Members asked what was the process for ensuring the safety of individuals being placed in temporary accommodation outside the Neath Port Talbot area. It was explained that officers liaise with relevant officers in the neighbouring authorities to ensure there was no inappropriate mix of individuals being accommodated.

Discussion took place on the Social Lettings Agency and whether there was any difficulties in recruiting suitable landlords. It was explained that the Agency currently has 60 properties and are proactively working to increase this number with various initiative for example providing loans to landlords to update empty properties. Officers confirmed that they only used landlords who achieved the required standard.

Discussion took place on case studies presented to Members for their information.

Members were appreciative of the service that is provided by Housing Options and emphasised the need to communicate this provision externally..

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

4. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

Resolved: That pursuant to Section 100A (4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

5. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

6.1 The Regulated Service (Service Providers and Response Individuals)(Wales) Regulations 2017.

The Committee received information in relation to The Regulated Service (Service Providers and Response Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017, as contained within the private circulated report.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

6.2 The Manager's Report on Hillside Secure Children's Home.

The Committee received information in relation to The Manager's Report on Hillside Secure Children's Home as contained within the private circulated report.

Discussion took place on the Responsible Individual role within Hillside and the request made by CSIW as part of the Improvement Action Plan to make Keri Warren, Head of Children's Services the Responsible Individual. This role was previously undertaken by Andrew Jarrett as the Head of Children's Services. Due to his appointment to the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing and being the Chair of the Safeguarding Board who have a responsibility for Hillside it was felt inappropriate for him to continue being the Responsible Individual. The Manager of Hillside is Alison Davies.

Members requested clarity on the positions and personnel in relation to Hillside. Officers informed the Committee of the relevant personnel in the staff structure, the Principal Manager was Ali Davies, the registered manager was Karen Wedmore and the Responsible Individual was Andrew Jarrett. Officers confirmed this function would be taken over by Keri Warren under the new regulations held in the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON